United Nations ST/IC/2005/8

Secretariat

26 January 2005

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Implementation of the change in the annual leave cycle**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff and administrators of the manner in which the change in the annual leave cycle announced in the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2004/16 is to be implemented.

2. The annual leave cycle was changed to address the situation that arose frequently under the prior cycle of 1 January to 31 December, where, due to exigencies of service, many staff members could not take annual leave in the last quarter of the calendar year and, as a result, lost accumulated leave in excess of 60 days on 1 January of the following year. It is anticipated that the change to an annual leave cycle for the period from 1 April to 31 March will permit most staff members to use their accumulated annual leave in the first quarter of the year, a period when work pressures are not as great in many offices.

3. As indicated in the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2004/16, any leave accumulated as of 31 December 2004 may be carried to 31 March 2005, even if it is in excess of 60 days, in order to facilitate the transition to the new cycle.

4. There will, however, be a number of staff members who will not be in a position to take the 7 ½ days of leave that will accrue in the first three months of 2005. Under strict application of the new annual leave cycle, any accumulated leave in excess of 60 days would be lost if not taken by 31 March 2005. Since the purpose of the change is to facilitate the exercise of annual leave, it has been decided that, **on a one-time and exceptional basis**, accumulated leave of up to 67 ½ days may be automatically carried into the new cycle of 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. The normal 60-day maximum will be observed starting from 1 April 2006.

5. It should be noted that the above will not affect the application of the rules limiting the number of days of annual leave that may be commuted to cash when a staff member separates from service.

* The present circular will be in effect until further notice.

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6. Many requests have been made to align the cycle used for uncertified sick leave entitlement, which is still on a calendar year basis, and the new annual leave cycle. The Office of Human Resources Management agrees that that would simplify the administration of leave entitlements. We are preparing the necessary amendments to existing rules, and will consult with staff and administrators before the amendments are finalized.

7. Staff members having questions on the implementation of the new annual leave cycle should address them to their executive or administrative office.